



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
WEBSITE: <http://latchildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, February 6, 2012

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-0679)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Roll Call

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Berger, Vice Chair Kang, Vice Chair Friedman, Commissioner Biondi, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney, Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner Sorkin and Commissioner Trevino-Powell

Excused: Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner Olivas and Commissioner Williams

Call to order. (12-0512)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:08 a.m. Self-introductions were made.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Approval of the agenda for February 6, 2012. (12-0513)

On motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was approved.

2. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of January 9, 2012. (Continued from the meeting of January 23, 2012.) (11-5507)

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of January 23, 2012. (12-0514)

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

4. Chair's report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for February 6, 2012. (12-0515)

Chair Curry reported the following:

- **The 8th Annual California Conference on Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss (Restoring Joy to Children and Families) will be held on March 22, 2012. The Chair is working with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to sponsor some of the Commission members' attendance to the conference.**
- **The Policy Roundtable for Child Care extended an invitation to the Commission for Children and Families to attend their meeting that will take place on February 22, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Commissioners should advise Commission Staff if they are planning to attend.**
- **At the System Team Leadership (SLT) meeting attended by Commissioner Sorkin, it was reported that there is an anticipation of additional Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds over the next fiscal year.**

After discussion, by Common Consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.

III. DCFS INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

5.

DCFS Interim Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Interim Director, DCFS.
(12-0517)

Interim Director Browning reported the following:

- **Preliminary data on AB12 indicates that approximately 60% of youth have opted to stay in the child welfare system since the implementation of AB12 in January, 2012.**
- **DCFS is moving forward with the Katie A. Project, as a result new training for DCFS Staff is being provided.**
- **The Quality Service Review (QSR) Project is moving along with the Core Practice Model being implemented at the DCFS Compton office in approximately one month.**

After discussion, by Common Consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.

IV. PRESENTATION

6. Roundtable discussion on issues related to the high number of children under the age of four (4) in foster care.

- Diane Wagner, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Kathy Malaske-Samu, Director, Office of Child Care, Chief Executive Office
- Bonnie Armstrong, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs
- Dr. Susan Smith, Director of Advocacy, Casey Family Programs
- Tony Walker, President & Chief Executive Officer, St. Anne's Residential Facility (12-0516)

Diane Wagner, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provided an update on the status of the Young Children in Child Welfare System Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup is in the process of gathering information about young children in the DCFS system and determining their necessity of services. The current focus is on how this data is being gathered, and next steps for with the analysis of the data and recommendations.

Ms. Armstrong, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs provided a brief introduction of Dr. Susan Smith, Director of Advocacy, Casey Family Programs.

Dr. Smith presented a statistical PowerPoint presentation relating to children in care/child welfare system (system) and background of the data gathered, thus far. She provided comparison data of children in care on the National level, State of California (State), and in Los Angeles County (County).

Dr. Smith further added the following:

- Although the County has shown no decline in the number of children entering care in contrast to the decline evident on a National and State level, the number of children in foster care in the County has declined. This information indicates that there is a great effort in finding permanency for children.**
- Upon further breaking down, by age of entry, of the data collected, it was found that County shows a higher rate of babies entering the system in contrast to the State and National rate. Furthermore, the County's rate of victimization of babies is similar to the National Average.**
- Data collected also indicated that neglect is the most common reason for entry, with child behavior becoming a prominent reason for entry at age 14. Neglect remained consistent at all ages; substance abuse was another factor that retained a stable rate in the County.**

Ms. Armstrong noted that a portion of the data presented was derived from DCFS statistical data.

Mr. Tony Walker, President and Chief Executive Officer, St. Anne's Residential (St. Anne's) reported the following:

- St. Anne's is the only remaining large residential treatment program serving pregnant and parenting young women and their children under three years of age. This facility receives approximately 80 young women and 45 children under the age of three annually.**
- Young children placed at St. Anne's are not court detainees and therefore would not be reflected in the statistical data provided by DCFS. The only youth that are reflected in the data are youth between the ages of 14 to 18 years of age (wards of the Court).**

- Although the number of youth entering St Anne's has declined in the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase of youth entering the facility with mental health issues, behavioral problems, and a history of having been placed multiple times.
- A large number of young women return to St. Anne's due to failed reunifications. Several of these young women have their children while in detention with hopes for reunification through St. Anne's Residential Treatment Program or the Transitional Housing Program.

Mr. Walker shared the article, "Teen Parents in Foster Care: Risk Factors and Outcomes for Teens and Their Children" with the Commission. He added that the young women arrive at St. Anne's with a history of experiencing a high degree of trauma, lack of education and skills necessary to care for their children.

Chair Curry opened up a roundtable discussion. In response to questions posed by the Commission, roundtable participants added the following:

Tony Walker, President and Chief Executive Officer, St. Anne's Residential

- The ethnic breakdown at St. Anne's is:
 - 65% Hispanic
 - 30% African American
 - 3 – 5 % Caucasian
 - There are very few Asian American.
- The County's development of new programs as an alternative to group home placement has reduced the number of children in larger group home facilities. The children who do not utilize these alternatives are those with severe mental health and/or other issues.
- Lack of resources and aftercare is not the major issue. The issue is that foster youth that is in care are very troubled and not able to control their behavior causing major problems for caretakers.
- Mr. Walker stated that he did not foresee youth opting for AB12 because of his experience in working with young girls who are eager to be out of the system once they are of age.

Diane Wagner, Acting Deputy Director, DCFS

- DCFS recognizes that tracking/extracting information on mental health needs for its cases is not simple; however, DCFS understands its importance and will continue to work on this endeavor in an effort to better service the youth in need of mental health services.
- The Workgroup is in the discovery phase collecting data and determining a methodology; there is no established timeline at this time. The timeline will be established based on the methodology; however, the objective is to provide recommendations within a year.

Commissioner Kleinberg, Workgroup Member

- The Workgroup is in the process of gathering information from various sources to better understand the 0-3 population and the minors in the system who are parenting a child. Some of the areas that are currently being looked at are:
 - Early brain development for young children 0-3.
 - The lack of executive management skills for parents which results in the inability to multi-task. Oftentimes parents tend to abandon one obligation for another because they are not able to handle multiple obligations.

Ms. Armstrong, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs

- Current research indicates that there is impact to the brain from trauma during early development. Research has helped identify windows of opportunity and types of prevention to help brain development.

The roundtable participants addressed the following:

- Reviewing the rate of permanency by taking a closer look at the length of time youth remain in the system. Oftentimes multiple placements and the system's failure to provide permanency at a young age for youth may be a major core problem.
- Developing a strategy for prevention to assist with the reduction of increased placements for children, ages 0-3. The following were identified as key stakeholders for prevention efforts:

- Faith-based community involvement
- Department of Mental Health involvement
- Review of “Success stories” to determine the factors that attributed to success.
- Strengthening families

Interim Director Browning added the following to the list of areas that need improvement:

- Los Angeles County’s implementation of plans
- Mentorship Programs
- Providing tools for Self-sufficiency
- Monitoring performance

In closing the roundtable discussion, Chair Curry summarized the discussion identifying the following areas of focus:

- Mental Health Issues
- Placement
- Community resources
- Prevention initiatives
- Role of First 5 LA

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Franzen, Olivas and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT-Casey Family Programs](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS - St. Anne's Residential Facility](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - Policy Roundtable for Child Care-CEO](#)

V. MISCELLANEOUS

Public Comment

7. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-0518)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Matters Not Posted

8. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-5493)

There were no matters posted.

Adjournment

9. Adjournment for the meeting of February 6, 2012. (12-0519)

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 11:52 a.m.